

Message Text

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FOR COURTNEY SHELDON FROM O/PRS

E.O. 11652: N/A

TA,S: SOPN, PLOS

SUBJECT: PRESS MATERIAL

1. HERewith WASHINGTON STAR EDITORIAL AUGUST 13, HEADED "LAW OF THE SEA."
2. THE UNITED NATIONS LAW OF THE SEA CONFERENCE HAS RESUMED IN NEW YORK. IT IS NOT AN EXAGGERATION TO SAY THAT A PROFOUND CHAPTER OF THE FUTURE IS BEING SHAPED -- OR, BY DEFAULT, WILL BE MISSHAPEN -- AS A RESULT OF THE NEGOTIATIONS.
3. BY REDUCTION, THERE ARE TWO ISSUES: POWER AND WEALTH, IF THAT IS NOT A TAUTOLOGY. A PRIME FOCUS IS THE DEEP SEA-

BED AND HOW IT WILL BE EXPLOITED AND CONTROLLED. "THE SEABED IS THE WORLD'S LAST FRONTIER," WILLIAM FRYE RECENTLY WROTE IN THE STAR. "IT CONTAINS HUNDREDS -- INDEED, ACCORDING TO SOME RESPONSIBLE ESTIMATES, THOUSANDS -- OF BIL-

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LIONS OF DOLLARS WORTH OF OIL, NATURAL GAS, NICKEL, MAN-

GANESE, COPPER AND OTHER MINERALS." OIL RESERVES ALONE ARE ESTIMATED BY THE U.S. INTERIOR DEPARTMENT TO BE WORTH BETWEEN 2.4 AND 24 THOUSAND BILLION DOLLARS AT PRESENT PRICES.

4. SINCE THE FIRST CONFERENCE WAS HELD IN CARACAS IN 1974 TO ATTEMPT TO DEAL WITH THE INCREDIBLY COMPLEX AND SENSITIVE MATTER OF INTERNATIONAL USE OF THE OCEANS, THERE HAS BEEN PROGRESS, THOUGH NOT WITHOUT DEEP DIVISIONS AND ACRIMONY -- FOUR-FIFTHS OF THE 400 PROPOSED TREATY ARTICLES HAVE BEEN GENERALLY AGREED UPON.

5. THOSE ISSUES REMAINING, HOWEVER, ARE IMMENSELY CONTROVERSIAL -- AND TIME IS CRITICAL. THERE SEEMS NOW TO BE A SENSE THAT AN INTERNATIONAL TREATY WILL REQUIRE AT LEAST ANOTHER SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE NEXT YEAR.

6. BUT EVENTS HAVE A HABIT OF OVERWHELMING INTENTIONS.

7. IN APRIL, PRESIDENT FORD SIGNED A BILL ESTABLISHING A 200-MILE OFFSHORE "ECONOMIC ZONE" OF U.S. FISHING JURISDICTION, TO TAKE EFFECT NEXT MARCH. CANADA AND MEXICO ALSO HAVE STAKED OUT EXCLUSIVE 200-MILE COASTAL ZONES, AS HAVE MOST OF THE LITTORAL NATIONS OF SOUTH AMERICA; SEVERAL WEEKS AGO, A MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE OF THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY APPROVED IN PRINCIPLE A SIMILAR DESIGN. AS MR. FRYE POINTED OUT IN THE STAR, THESE EXTENSIONS OF SOVEREIGN INTEREST, ENACTED OR INTENDED, WOULD ACCOUNT FOR MORE THAN ONE THIRD OF WHAT HAS BEEN CONSIDERED THE HIGH SEAS.

8. FROM FISHING RIGHTS TO MINERAL CONTROL WOULD BE ONLY A STEP. IF INTERNATIONAL RESOLUTION ON USE OF THE OCEANS DOES NOT COME WITH SOME RAPIDITY, IT WILL BE DIFFICULT TO RESTRAIN UNILATERAL NATIONAL INTERESTS AND ENTREPRENEURS FROM GRABBING WHILE THE GRABBING IS GOOD. LEGISLATION, IN FACT, HAS BEEN INTRODUCED ALREADY IN CONGRESS THAT WOULD PROTECT U.S. MINING COMPANIES OPERATING OFFSHORE, NOT NECESSARILY RESTRICTING THAT PROTECTION TO THE 200-MILE ZONE.

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OTHER INDUSTRIALIZED NATIONS WITH SEABED TECHNOLOGIES DEVELOPING AS RAPIDLY AS OUR OWN ARE ALSO ANXIOUS TO BEGIN EXPLOITING THE SEA BOTTOM.

9. SHOULD THESE NATIONAL IMPULSES BE UNLEASHED, THE RESULTS, AS SECRETARY OF STATE KISSINGER PUT IT, WOULD BE "UNRESTRAINED COMMERCIAL RIVALRY, MOUNTING POLITICAL TURMOIL, AND EVENTUALLY MILITARY CONFLICT. WE STAND IN DAN-

GER OF REPEATING, WITH RESPECT TO THE OCEANS, THE BITTER RIVALRIES THAT HAVE PRODUCED ENDLESS CONFLICT ON LAND." GREAT BRITAIN'S LORD RICHIE CALDER PHRASED IT MORE GRAPHICALLY: THE WORLD FACES WHAT COULD BECOME "THE BIGGEST SMASH AND GRAB SINCE THE EUROPEAN POWERS ... CARVED UP BLACK AFRICA."

10. A COALITION OF POORER NATIONS AND THOSE "GEOGRAPHICALLY DISADVANTAGED" -- LANDLOCKED OR WITH LIMITED WATER ACCESS -- UNDERSTANDABLY ARE TAKING THE UNITED NATIONS' DESCRIPTION OF THE OCEAN TREASURE LITERALLY, THAT THESE RESOURCES ARE A "COMMON HERITAGE" OF MANKIND. THEY WANT A SHARE.

11. THE COALITION WANTS INTERNATIONAL CONTROL AND MANAGEMENT ESTABLISHED, AN INTERNATIONAL SEABED AUTHORITY. THIS BODY WOULD LICENSE MINING OF SOME PORTIONS OF THE OCEAN FLOOR AND HIRE CONTRACTORS TO EXPLOIT OTHER PARTS; ROYALTIES AND INCOME WOULD GO TO THE WORLD BANK AND SIMILAR INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS WHICH PROVIDE CAPITAL FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. THE UNITED STATES ACCEPTS INTERNATIONAL MANAGEMENT OF SEABED MINING IN PRINCIPLE, BUT WANTS THESE RESOURCES SHARED WITH PRIVATE INITIATIVE ALSO.

12. THE NEGOTIATIONS IN NEW YORK -- ON SEABED MINING AND RELATED MATTERS -- ARE SCHEDULED TO CONTINUE TO SEPTEMBER 17.

13. NO INTERNATIONAL TREATY ON THE LAW OF THE SEA WILL ERASE NATIONAL SELF-INTERESTS OR SUBDUE DESIRES FOR THE ALMOST UNIMAGINABLE PROFITS OF THE OCEANS. BUT WITHOUT SUCH A TREATY, WITHOUT SENSITIVE ADMINISTRATIVE MECHANISMS AND, PARTICULARLY, WITHOUT AN ACUTE SENSE OF THE POTENTIAL

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FOR FEARSOME INTERNATIONAL CONFLICT REPRESENTED BY THIS OCEANIC FRONTIER, WE LIKELY WILL GO ON REPEATING OUR HISTORICAL FOLLIES AND CRIMES. END TEXT. ROBINSON

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